

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA : Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to ask the Minister through you by making a request that this campaign is to impart literacy to the illiterate people in the country. Sir, it is a fact and I firmly believe that it is being misused at a large scale and this scheme is being run on the papers only and the fund released for this purpose is swallowed by education mafia and officers. I would like to tell you that if an enquiry is conducted north eastern district you will find that there is not a single place where people have been educated. I demand this programme may be discontinued and other programme may be formulated to educate the people. This amount is going only into the pockets of officers and education mafias. This is not being utilised for the welfare of masses. Therefore, I would like to request the Government to ponder over as to what should be done to educate for people.

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Mishraji, this is only a suggestion, not a question.

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA : We want to know from the Government whether efforts have been made to ascertain as to where this money has been utilised ? . . . (Interruptions). Whether the officers have submitted any report to the Government in regard to the number of schools functioning and the number of persons imparted education.

[English]

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : This scheme has commenced in the year 1988. It has gone in a very good manner in some States and districts. I admit that it is a failure in some States and districts. I do not deny it. But totally, we have achieved its implementation in 430 districts. The number of persons who have become literates under these schemes comes to 63.54 million. But, in some States it is not so successful. I must admit here that in the south it has been implemented very well where the voluntary organisations and Village Panchayats are alert and vigilant. In the north, where the Village Panchayats, local administration as well as the voluntary organisations are not coming forth, there it is a failure. . . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA : Sir, please try to save this money. . . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please give chance to other hon'ble Members also.

SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in his reply, the hon'ble Minister has stated that out of the 198 organisations, 59 organisations have been evaluated. I would like to know from him the number of such organisations which have misutilised funds out of the above mentioned 59 organisations in regard to which external valuation has been done and the action taken by

the administration against them in the district concerned?

[English]

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Sir, we have taken action against the defaulting voluntary organisations. They number about 15 to 20.

Oil Pool Deficit

*264 SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Oil Corporation is faced with difficulty in securing oil supplies from abroad because of its heavy borrowings amounting to thousands of crores besides very huge over-dues;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this Ministry propose to seek repayment of 4300 crores from the Ministry of Finance, taken as loan by that Ministry from oil pool deficit, to reduce Rs. 17,500 crores oil pool deficit;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the measures proposed to be taken to reduce the oil pool deficit ?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) The outstanding dues of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) from Oil Coordination Committee (OCC) which were Rs. 3471 crores as on 31.3.96 has increased to Rs. 9034 crores as on 31.3.97. However, Indian Oil Corporation is presently able to organise imports of crude oil and petroleum products as its ceiling of short term foreign currency borrowings for financing the oil imports has been progressively enhanced from US \$ 1.53 billion upto February, 96 to the present sanctioned limit of US \$ 3.5 billion. In addition, the corporation has also availed US \$ 200 million 7 years loan for import of oil.

(c) and (d) The Government had decided in 1997 that surplus funds of OCC's pool account would be deposited in the Public Account and it is being followed since then. The balance of OCC's deposits lying with the Public Account as on 31.3.93 amounting to Rs. 4429.03 crores formed part of the "Other Liabilities" of the Government of India and continues to be so.

(e) The cumulative outstandings of the oil companies from pool account are estimated to be Rs. 15,500 crores as on 31.3.97 and projected to be Rs. 24,500 crores by 31.3.98 as per the prices adopted in Oil Economy Budget (OEB). The Government have been exploring various options to contain the deficit in the oil pool account.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the question regarding the oil pool deficit has become mysterious. The people are unable to understand whether it is a deficit, a scandal or a scam. The answer fails to clarify any point. In 1989 the oil pool had a surplus of Rs. 9267 crores. Now, the Minister is giving figures that the deficit will go upto Rs.24500 crores by next year. My question to the Minister is, what steps have been taken to contain the oil pool deficit which was in surplus ? Is the burgeoning deficit due to the Government's failure or other reasons ?

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is deficit in the oil pool and nothing else. The honourable Member mentioned that there was no deficit before 1989. The Oil pool itself means that, if the amount spent is more than the deficit, it would be deficit. First, the demand for petroleum products was less. Second, when there was price rise in the world market, a corresponding increase in its price was effected, this did not lead to deficit. Petroleum products were imported, and its price did not increase too much. But the situation changed in the past two three years. Whereas the price increased in the international market, we did not increase the domestic price. This led to increase in the deficit. Since then this deficit is on the rise. Because the earning is less and the expenditure is increasing.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Is the oil port amount is being spent else where ? Have you spent the amount else where ?

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : This amount is not being spent else where.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : This is mentioned in it clearly. My second question is that the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., which imports oil has a monopoly. The domestic prices have been increased from time to time. Then why is the deficit increasing ? In the reply in part (c) it has been mentioned that other options are being explored to contain the deficit. It is being said in the country and the Parliament that the price rise cannot be justified. I want the Minister to give an assurance in the House that concrete steps would be taken to contain this deficit, and that the people would not be burdened further with price rise.

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is

difficult for me to give such an assurance as this issue is under the active consideration of the Government. I would not be in a position to say anything in this regard till the Government takes a decision in this regard. After taking a decision I would speak again in the House whatever decision is taken regarding the increase or decrease in its price, the House will be taken into confidence. Anything on the contrary would be constructed as a breach of conduct against us.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA : Breach of conduct would take place, if you increase the price, without taking the House into confidence.

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Whatever the decision regarding the increase or decrease in its price, the nation would be told after taking the House into confidence.

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through you I want to know from the Government, whether there is any pressure regarding the oil pool deficit from the world market ? Whether the Petroleum Ministry has formulated a plan to shield the common man from price rise and to lessen the influence of the world market?

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : There is no pressure from the world market.

[English]

SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Sir, I would like to know whether the prices of the petroleum products produced inside the country is less than that of the petroleum products purchased from abroad. Has the Government received any proposal to collect money from other sources instead of raising the prices of petroleum products in order to make up the loss to the oil pool ? If so, what are the suggestions and what steps the Government had taken on those suggestions ?

[Translation]

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Indian Oil Corporation is trying to meet the requirement of petroleum by importing from foreign countries by taking it on credit from the gas bankers. It is true that the petroleum products, produced in India are cheaper than the petroleum products produced in foreign countries. But it is compulsory for us to purchase it at the rates prevailing in markets of the world because we cannot meet the petroleum requirement of our country from domestic production.

[English]

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Sir, the whole North-Eastern region has abundant natural gas. At one time, the Government had decided to supply gas at a reduced price

in order to encourage more utilisation of gas and some projects were also taken up. But I am surprised and shocked to see that none of the projects had found place in the hon. Prime Minister's special package. Have you revised the price or are you thinking of increasing the price of the gas produced in North-East because of location and other things ?

Hon. Speaker also knows about it. He had a role to play when he was in the Ministry of Industries. In face some of the projects came up during his time. After that nothing has come up. What is the reason ? What is your thinking about it ?

MR. SPEAKER : I do not think the hon. Minister would have the information about it.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : As far as the pipeline is concerned, the State of Tripura wants to give it to Bangladesh and Bangladesh wants to give it to Calcutta. Nothing happens in North-East. All sympathies are only on paper.

[Translation]

SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA : Mr. Sepaker, Sir, it is not only gas but other petroleum products are also available in the North East. A group of the workers of ONGC and Oil India have emerged whom I do not consider bad men. The State Government has to be paid royalty. They demand royalty separately for their area and the officers posted there come back in a scared way as there is no security set up for them. Due to these crisis, there is no improvement and expansion of work there. We did ask our officers too as to whether any arrangement can be made for it. At this they replied that they need state Government's help in this matter. State Governments spend less for the development of roads, schools, hospitals and other facilities at the place where gas or petroleum is extracted. So, they demand royalty separately. This is the biggest problem due to which there is difficulty in starting a new project.

[English]

Prices of Natural Gas

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*265. SHRI NITISH KUMAR :
SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have drawn up a proposal to mobilise additional resources to the tune of Rs. 250 crore each year by raising the prices of natural gas;

(b) if so, the extent to which the prices of natural gas are likely to be increased;

(c) whether the Government have estimated the production cost of natural gas;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the percentage of profit on the existing sale price; and

(f) the proposed percentage of profit in future ?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JNANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) to (d) and (f) The Government has appointed a Committee to go into the question of revision of the prices of natural gas. The Committee has submitted its report and the same is under consideration of the Government.

(e) The producer prices of the natural gas had been fixed in January, 1992 at Rs. 1500 per thousand cubic meters. This price was fixed taking into account the prevailing cost of production and after providing 15% post tax return on the equity of the producer. The producer price of the gas has not been revised since then.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Government does not reply any question in a categorical way. All news is published in the newspapers through Government sources but when any question is raised in the Parliament, the Government gives an evasive reply. A news has been published in the newspapers that the Government is going to revise the price of natural gas to have an additional income of Rs. 250 crore. But they have mentioned about a Committee here and stated that the Committee has submitted its recommendations. When did the Committee submit its recommendations to you and by when you will take a decision on it ?

Second point is that when a point about cost of production is raised, the Government tells about producers' loss. Let us know about cost of production and let us know how much subsidy you have to pay and how much revenue loss is being suffered by the Government. The public should be told this clearly. Let me know plainly what is your production cost and how much subsidy you are paying thereon, How much loss the Government has been suffering and what steps you want to take to make up that loss ? This was the sole target of mine to be aware of this fact. This is my question. Please reply it, you are giving an evasive reply that it is under consideration.